

Building Connections

BRIDGING THE DIVIDE TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Section Summaries and Recommendations

Affordable and Accessible Housing

Access to affordable housing in high-demand areas is a substantial contributor to economic disparity. As lower- and moderate-income Americans are faced with fewer options for affordable housing in the areas they want to live, they are denied access to good schools, public amenities, and well-paying jobs. High housing costs also weaken economic security by preventing savings and wealth accumulation.

When talented, hard-working, or entrepreneurial people are effectively kept out of places with opportunity, they face barriers to achieving their economic potential.

Because much of the nation's housing crisis is a function of shortages of affordable homes, supply must be increased to meet current demand. The Select Committee recommends that the federal government provide incentives for the construction and rehabilitation of affordable and market-rate homes in areas of the most acute shortages. Further, since increasing housing supply will take years, the Committee recommends additional support for renters and homebuyers now.

Summary of Select Committee Recommendations:

- **Discourage overly restrictive zoning and encourage inclusive zoning.**
- **Encourage the private sector to build affordable housing units.**
- **Enact federal down payment assistance for first-generation homebuyers.**
- **Increase support to low- and moderate-income renters.**
- **Increase the construction workforce through education, apprenticeships, and workforce development programs.**

Hard Infrastructure Investments

Since the nation has taken a historic first step in addressing many of our infrastructure needs with the passage of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in 2021, communities will be able to get federal assistance to begin addressing long-term, systemic shortcomings that have hindered economic prosperity and economic growth. The legislation, which provides \$550 billion over five years for bold, targeted investments, including \$110 billion for roads, bridges, and major projects, \$66 billion for passenger and freight rail, \$65 billion for broadband, \$39 billion for public transit, \$11 billion for transportation safety, and \$1 billion to remove barriers to opportunity created by past infrastructure projects. Federal, state and local governments must ensure these funds are used to maximize economic opportunity for communities and people in underserved communities.

Summary of Select Committee Recommendations:

- **Establish criteria for infrastructure projects to prioritize equity and maximize impact.**
- **Strengthen local administrative capacity and prioritize engagement.**
- **Simplify and streamline regulatory and permitting processes on infrastructure projects.**
- **Invest in a talent pipeline for the infrastructure workforce.**